

Washington, DC - Working to improve Southern California's environment and drinking water supply, Congresswoman Linda Sánchez (CA-39) today announced that she has secured \$500,000 for the third phase of the Los Angeles Basin Watershed Augmentation Study. The funding was included in the Omnibus Appropriations bill (H.R. 4818) which passed the U.S. House of Representatives on November 20th by a vote of 344 to 51. President Bush is expected to sign the bill into law in the near future.

"In paving and developing the Los Angeles area over the past 75 years, we've reduced the natural ability of the ground to absorb rain and recharge underground water supplies. This study will show how innovative techniques to capture rain and stormwater runoff can increase our supply of local drinking water and protect our nearby ocean and beaches from street pollution carried by stormwater," said Congresswoman Linda Sánchez.

Previous funds are paying for tests of different technologies in different urban settings. For example, the City of Long Beach is allowing Veterans Park to be a test site. Simple drains have been placed in the parking lot gutters of Veterans Park to capture stormwater runoff and channel it several feet under the park where it is spread out underground so that the water can be naturally filtered by the soil and percolate down to the water table. Normally, stormwater from a parking lot would be directed to a storm drain flowing to a nearby concrete river channel and on to the ocean, wasting the water and carrying along unfiltered street pollution to the ocean and local beaches.

In this next phase of the study, the \$500,000 in federal funds secured by Sánchez will partner with state and local funds to design "neighborhood level" projects to implement the techniques examined in the first phases of the study. Neighborhood designs may include features such as permeable street gutters that allow storm water to percolate down to the water table, and curb-cuts in parking lots to allow runoff to flow into landscape areas instead of to storm drains.

Long Beach and other communities in southeast L.A. County have a long-standing interest in reducing stormwater runoff and the pollution it carries, which harms water quality in local shorelines and beaches. While it is not a financial partner in the water augmentation study, Long Beach is supportive and is allowing Veterans Park to be used as a test site.

"I want to say thanks to Congresswoman Sánchez for her support on this project," said Long Beach Councilman Frank Colonna. "It's so important for us to be working in partnership with the federal government on matters like this. Water quality and water-related issues are going to be among our biggest priorities in California in the future."

The Los Angeles Basin Water Augmentation Study is being implemented by the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council in conjunction with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. Partners include local agencies such as the Metropolitan Water District and environmental organizations such as Tree People. Additional funding has been provided by state grants and contributions and cooperation from local public agencies.